



A CHRISTMAS MYSTERY


For Giving In Home or Church

By

Rev. Russell Bowles, D. D.

The mystery should be enacted in the late afternoon or evening with the room in complete darkness for the entrance of the Virgin and the Angel. The Virgin takes her place upon a raised platform erected at one end of the room; the angel stands directly back of the Virgin's chair.

Down the center of the room a group of children or grown-ups are seated in two lines upon the floor forming an aisle about one yard wide along which the shepherds, the magi, and the pilgrim pass coming from a door in the rear. If there is a side door near the platform, the angel uses this for entrance and exit. Before the play, a small candle and a song sheet is given to each guest and each is asked to keep a complete silence until the climax of the mystery when all join in singing "O Little Town of Bethlehem"



After the entrance of Mary and the Angel the room is dimly lighted revealing the seated Virgin holding the Christ Child, only the form being visible beneath the folds of her cloak. Behind her shoulder, slightly to one side, is a single candle in a tall holder. In front of her, slightly to the other side, is a similar candle arrangement. From a small lighted candle concealed with her hands, the Angel lights the tall candle back of Mary, leaving the one in the foreground unlighted. So the play opens as the Angel speaks.

Costume Suggestions

Mary wears a full white dress with a blue cape and a blue or white veil. The Angel, too, is dressed in white, her loose sleeves lined with gold colored material, her girāle pastel-colored silk. Her hair is worn loose with a halo, a gilded disk of cardboard back of her head. If practicable, make wings of wire and gilded buckram.

The shepherds are most realistic in knee length tunics made of drab, rough material. Girdles are worn with short cloaks falling loose from the shoulders. Feet, legs and arms are bare. Each shepherd carries with him a long, crude staff.

The Wise Men wear tunics of rich color, each different, and reaching to their feet which are sandled, girdles of twisted colors and capes are suspended from the shoulders. They wear turbans or circular crowns made of gilded pasteboard and imitation jewels. In their hands they carry ornamental boxes or braziers to indicate their gifts.

The pilgrim's costume is much the same as that of the Wise Men except the color is subdued and there is no cape. The pilgrim, too, should carry a staff.

THE MYSTERY

The Angel

Thus to the long night of the waiting earth
Thus to the darkness of the needs of men
The light of God comes down in Jesus' birth
Not to be lost again.

Mary

I saw the glory shining in the sky
I saw the splendor of the Hosts on high
Yet strangely round me still the shadows lie.
Yea, even in this holy place;
And shadows, little son, are on thy face.

The Angel

The candle of the love of God is lighted,
But something else must answer heaven's grace,
The love of man must light another candle
Before man's eyes can look on Jesus' face.

(The Angel vanishes)

Mary

Dark is that candle still,
And yet I know
Somewhere from out the heart of man the love will come
To make it glow.

(Two shepherds draw near)

First Shepherd

It was the wonderfulest light that ever I saw.

Second Shepherd

It made me a-feared. I am all of a tremble yet.

First Shepherd

But it meant some great thing, I warrant you.

Second Shepherd

Yes, there will be a sight to see somewhere.
But my eyes are dazzled still. I cannot rightly
mark what I look at.

First Shepherd

The voice we heard said that we should come here
to Bethlehem. It said there was a baby somewhere
here, a baby who should be a King.

Second Shepherd

Look, yonder is the mother, and it must be
the baby she is holding.

(They draw near)

First Shepherd (to Mary)

Is that your baby you have there? And is he
to be a King?

Mary

The voices of old prophets have proclaimed Him
The dreamers of the ages have beheld Him
The hearts of all the hungry have desired Him.
He is the King.

Second Shepherd

It may be as you say. But it is very shadowy
here. I cannot see him well.

First Shepherd

I cannot, neither. I cannot see His face.

Mary

If you could light this candle, you could see Him
But he alone can light it who shall bring
Out of his heart a love so clearly burning
That it is fit to shine upon the King.

(The shepherds draw aside and remain standing near Mary's seat)
(The first Wise Man appears, followed by the two others)

First Wise Man

The star has led us far, and now it hovers like
a great beacon which has come to rest.

Second Wise Man

What town is that which lies upon the hill?

Third Wise Man

'Tis Bethlehem-town, even as the scribes in Herod's
court have told us.

(They draw nearer)

First Wise Man

We heard strange words, remember, of this King
whom we have sought for. Men say that He may
come in lowly guise.

Second Wise Man

Then must He value more these mighty gifts we bring.

Third Wise Man

Behold, tread softly and speak low. There is a maiden
yonder, and the radiance of our star is in her eyes.

First Wise Man (Kneeling and laying down a golden casket)

Draw near, and let us lay our treasure at her feet.

O maiden mother, if in your arms you held the King,

I bring to him this treasure fit for great ones
of the earth.

Second Wise Man (Laying down a precious box of smoking incense)

And frankincense

Third Wise Man (Laying down another jewellad thing)

and spices from the rich far East.

Mary

You have beheld the star,
Can you behold His face?

(They all stand and gaze upon Him)

First Wise Man

Like something seen afar.

Second Wise Man

Strange shadows in this place

Are deep. There is a dimness here.

Or else my eyes are dim. Whiche'er it be

I cannot surely see.

(They draw aside and one stands next to the two shepherds, the other
two opposite)

(A Pilgrim approaches and kneels before Mary)

The Pilgrim

Not for my desert, but of thy grace, I crave that I may
kneel within thy presence. With eyes unlighted and with
empty hands I come. I have not even seen the star the
Magi followed. I only heard a rumor that the King was born.
All my life long I have desired His coming, but I have not
known where to find Him; and when I thought to search for
Him, lesser things have held me back. The hands of the
world's need have reached out to me. The urgency of the
world's cry arrested me. In humble places, I have stopped

to help men with their burdens. I have tarried to talk with children about their trivial concerns. The pilgrimage I had thought to make has moved nowhere except on common human ways. I who had thought to love the King have loved only man instead. And all my life is now no more than a candle without a flame.

(He holds up in his hands a half-burned candle. The angel reappears.)

The Angel

You think that you have burned your life away.
But you have lighted God in other men,
And God's light, passing on from one to one,
Comes back as love to light your life again.

(From the tall candle behind Mary, the Angel lights the small candle held in the hand of the nearest of the people, and the light is passed from each person to the next, until at the last the candle of the Pilgrim is lighted.)

The Angel continues

And love which thus is shared has now sufficed
To do what neither pride nor riches can.
You shall make clear to men the face of Christ;
Go, light the candle of the love of man.


(He lights the tall candle in front of Mary. A light from a flashlight hidden in Mary's robes glows above the Christ-Child in her arms.)

Pilgrim (kneeling at one side before Mary)

O Lord, I pray thee give to all this Grace
In love's full light to look on Jesus' face.

(The Pilgrim remains kneeling, and the Wise Man and the shepherds grouped to the right and left of Mary remain motionless, as does the angel standing behind her, while the people holding their lighted candles in their hands sing the hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem." As the last verse is sung, the characters of the Mystery go silently out, first the Angel, then the two shepherds, then one of the Wise Men, then the two other Wise Men, the Pilgrim, and Mary last.

From
CHRISTIAN HEROLD
Entertainment Department
419 Fourth Avenue
New York City



Phillips Brooks'
Last Christmas Carol.




“EVERYWHERE, EVERYWHERE
CHRISTMAS TO-NIGHT.”


Music by

Lewis H. Redner,

*Composer of the music to Phillips Brooks' first Christmas Carol,
"O Little Town of Bethlehem."*



PHILADELPHIA :



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Single copy 5 cts ; 50 cts per doz. ; \$4.00 per hundred, postpaid

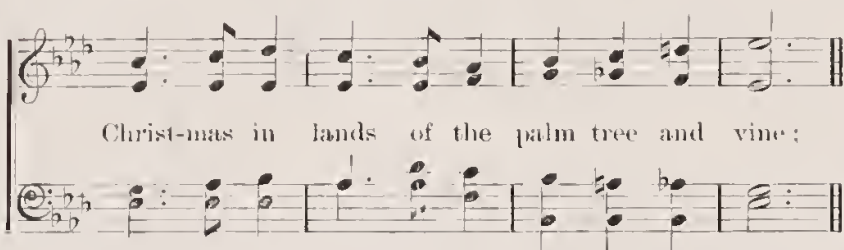
Everywhere, Everywhere Christmas To-night.

Words by PHILLIPS BROOKS.

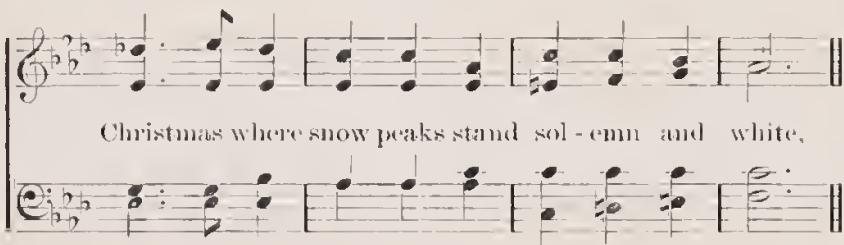
Music by LEWIS H. REONER.




1. Christ-mas in lands of the fir tree and pine,



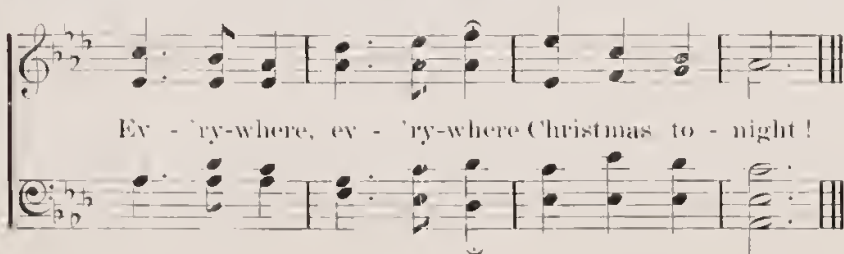
Christ-mas in lands of the palm tree and vine;



Christmas where snow peaks stand sol - emn and white,



Christ-mas where corn-fields lie sun - ny and bright;



Ev - 'ry-where, ev - 'ry-where Christmas to - night!

1.

CHRISTMAS in lands of the fir tree and pine,
Christmas in lands of the palm tree and vine;
Christmas where snow peaks stand solemn and white,
Christmas where corn-fields lie sunny and bright;
Everywhere, everywhere Christmas to-night!

2.

Christmas where children are hopeful and gay,
Christmas where old men are patient and gray,
Christmas where peace, like a dove in its flight,
Broods o'er brave men in the thick of the fight;
Everywhere, everywhere Christmas to-night!

3.


For the Christ-child who comes is the Master of all;
No palace too great—no cottage too small.
The angels who welcome Him sing from the height,
“*In the city of David a King in His might.*”
Everywhere, everywhere Christmas to-night!

4.

Then let every heart keep its Christmas within
Christ's pity for sorrow, *Christ's* hatred of sin,
Christ's care for the weakest, *Christ's* courage for right,
Christ's dread of the darkness, *Christ's* love of the light,
Everywhere, everywhere Christmas to-night!

5.

So the stars of the midnight which compass us round,
Shall see a strange glory and hear a sweet sound,
And cry, “*Look!* the earth is aflame with delight,
O sons of the morning rejoice at the sight.”
Everywhere, everywhere Christmas to-night!

A rectangular border is drawn with thin black lines. At each of the four corners, there is a decorative ornament consisting of a central point with several radiating lines, some ending in small dots, resembling a stylized sunburst or star.

MUSIC TYPOGRAPHY,
DUDLEY T. LIMERICK,
706 CHESTNUT ST., PHILA.

1928
Christmas Carols



Saint Thomas Chapel
New York City

(Please do not take away)

1928 CAROLS

ST. THOMAS' CHAPEL

New York City

26

OLD FRENCH: Poitevin
Au Saint Nau

Hail, Noel!
I shall sing with joy unhidden,
Scorning ev'ry thought fear-ridden,
On this holy Festal Day,
Hail, hail, hail!
On this holy Festal Day.

There we sat and grumbled on (Noel)
Grumbled, I suppose, as usual,
Like us shepherds, ev'ry one (Noel)
Watching sheep in pasture casual,
Of that deed
Adam did against his Master,
Ate the fruit of dire disaster,
Thus committing deadly sin,
Hail, hail, hail!
Thus committing deadly sin.

I was lolling on the mead (Noel!)
On my fife a ditty playing,
My friend Hugh, upon his reed, (Noel!)
His reply to me essaying;
When there came
From the sky, an angel flying,
And a joyous greeting crying,
Whereof I had radiant joy,
Hail, hail, hail!
Whereof I had radiant joy.

Crying: shepherds, wake, awake! (Noel!)
Rise to cheer and merry-making!
God's own Lamb doth heav'n forsake, (Noel)
Of a Virgin our flesh taking;
In Bethlem,
With no bed its ease supplying,
He is in a manger lying,
In a common stable born,
Hail, hail, hail!
In a common stable born.

At the hour of deep midnight (Noel!)
There I saw a great sun rising—
Oh, Colleen, think! what a sight! (Noel)
Did I spread the news surprising?
I forsook
Hastily my flocks there feeding,
Left my clothes, my song unheeding,
Ran to see the Savior Christ,
Hail, hail, hail!
Ran to see the Savior Christ.

Like the very wind I sped, (Noel!)
Till my tongue was parch'd as may be;
Till I found that manger bed, (Noel!)
Knelt before that Maiden's Baby:
There I saw
Kneeling ox and ass adore Him—
Joseph's rushlight held high o'er Him
Gave me light enough to see,
Hail, hail, hail!
Gave me light enough to see.

Tr. R.M.D.

27

OLD FRENCH: *Noel Nouvelet*

Noel comes again!
Noel let us sing here!
Faithful Christian folk,
thank God with voices clear:
Sing, sing Noel
for our King newly come:
Noel!
for our King newly come:
Noel comes again!
Noel let us sing here!

For the angel said:
Ye shepherds haste from here,
With rejoicing heart
and spirit without fear;
Seek ye the Lamb,
the Lamb of Bethlehem,
Noel!
the Lamb of Bethlehem:
Noel comes again!
Noel let us sing here!

There in Bethlehem
the Family reve—
Joseph and Marie,
Christ Jesus, Babe so dear:
There for a crib
a manger does for Him,
Noel!
a manger does for Him:
Noel comes again!
Noel let us sing here!

Behold, our Lord God,
Our Savior Christ: is here,
Who salvation gains
by His Blood red and clear:
Won by His Blood,
then let us live for Him,
Noel!
then let us live for Him:
Noel comes again!
Noel let us sing here!

Tr. R.M.D.

28

OLD FRENCH: 1648
Entre le boeuf et l'âne gris

Between the ox and gray ass mild;
Sleep! Sleep! Dear little Child!

Chorus

Angel hosts guard Him,
Myriad seraphim,
Flutter bright above
This dear God of love. (2)

His Mother holds her little Son;
Sleep! Sleep! Dear little One!
This Festal Day His birth we hail:
Sleep! Sleep! Sleep, Emmanuel!

Tr. R.M.D.

OLD FRENCH

Quem vidistis, pastores

After an Ancient Antiphon
The oldest known Carol.

Shepherds, in the field abiding,
Tell us, when the Seraph bright
Greeted you with wondrous tidings,
What ye saw and heard that night:

Response

Gloria in excelsis Deo!
Gloria in excelsis Deo!

We beheld (it is no fable)
God incarnate, King of bliss,
Swathed and cradled in a stable,
And the angel-strain was this:

Quiristers on high were singing
Jesus and His Virgin-birth;
Heav'nly bells the while a-ringing,
'Peace, goodwill to men on earth.'

Thanks, good herdmen; true your story;
Have with you to Bethlehem:
Angels hymn the King of Glory:
Carol we with you and them.

OLD FRENCH

O Dieu, l'Etrange Chose

Ah, Lord! a matchless wonder
Hath come upon us here,
A myst'ry all may ponder,
Tho reason cannot clear,
The Word, the All-worthy,
Supernal, Eternal,
God's promise to fulfil,
Thru love profound and vernal,
For man that doth such ill,
To take our flesh doth will.

O love beyond all measure!
O marvel without peer!
The King of heavenly treasure
Hath naught of earthly cheer.
The Maiden, grief-laden,
Who bore Him, adores Him,
Who has nor crib nor bed:
Tho God, He asks naught for Him,
Content whate'er His stead
With Mary's breast for bed.

Whence is this brightness given
That fills the cave with light?
Courtiers from realms of heaven
Throng in all clad in white:
The angels, archangels,
Astounded, abounded
With music everywhere;
The shepherds stand confounded;
Their eyes, enchanted, start—
Such wonders fill the air.

O weep no more, dear lady,
And dry away all tears;
Receive, we pray, dear Baby,
The presents each one bears:
Our mothers, our brothers,

Address Thee, and press Thee,
With heart and gift complete;
The shepherds seek a blessing
And offer their best sheep:
Accept our homage meet.

Tr. R.M.D.

OLD FRENCH

Rien n'est comparable

Ah, naught can I liken,
My Savior, to Thee!
Yea, naught but Thy favor
Is precious to me:
O Love, I adore Thee,
Take my heart to Thee!

O heavenly wonder,
Divine radiancy;
Great God who dost ask but
That we happy be:
O Bounty unequal'd,
Take my heart to Thee!

When as, my dear Savior,
I think upon Thee,
My heart as Thy temple
I give tremblingly:
O Love unexampled,
Take my heart to Thee!

O Source of all being,
All beauty to be,
Thou takest for mortals
Our mortality:
O Bounty unbounded,
Take my heart to Thee!

Tr. R.M.D.

OLD FRENCH

Thy Son, O King of Glory,
Is come down from on high!
Our songs of His victory
Resound unto the sky:
He triumphs over wrong,
He calms our fear and sadness,
He draws the world along,
And gone
For evermore
Our tears of yore
For days of peace and gladness.

Vain worldly pomp and station
Are all forgotten now,
With joyous resignation
To humble life I bow:
From error's way set free
By Him, my true Defender,
I go with Him, and He
With me;
To flatt'ring praise,
Enchantment's maze,
No homage now I render.

O claim as Thine my spirit,
My Jesus, King divine,
Nor let it burn with merit
That is not wholly Thine:
For what has worldly love

But suffering and sadness!
 Raise me, O heavenly Dove,
 Above
 And set a-fire
 My heart's desire
 To love but Thee with gladness.
Tr. R.M.D.

33

OLD FRENCH
Les Deux Bergeres
 Dialogue-Noel

The Pious Shepherdess
 Haste, nor be delaying,
 Catherine, I wait!
 Where may you be straying,
 Why are you so late?
 Let us seek the manger,
 Where there doth recline,
 To all pomp a stranger,
 Now the Child divine!

The Worldly Shepherdess
 Yet a moment staying,
 Wait for me, I pray,
 Why such haste betraying,
 Would you on your way?
 Lincens white I'm folding,
 Swaddling-clothes to bring,
 In my arms them folding,
 To the angels' King.

The Pious Shepherdess
 Joyful is my story,
 Goddiss Son and pride,
 He was born to glory
 In this countryside.
 He was born to save us,
 Blessed be the hour
 Which a Master gave us
 Who ro save hath power.

The Worldly Shepherdess
 Vain is your attesting
 Fables such as these,
 Cease, I pray, your jesting,
 'Tis not like to please.
 That a prince undying,
 Israel's king and chief,
 Is in stable lying,
 Passes all belief.

The Pious Shepherdess
 Listen ye, by token
 Of the news I tell,
 Hear the message spoken,
 Mark its meaning well.
 Of a Virgin mother,
 Rose without a thorn,
 God Himself its father,
 Shall a Child be born.

The Worldly Shepherdess
 Is your tale a fable?
 Do your words deceive?
 Fallacies unstable
 Am I to believe?
 Are your fancies playing
 Close by falsehood's brink?
 Of the things you're saying
 What am I to think?

The Pious Shepherdess
 Strange the words you utter,
 Faith you do not own;
 Must an angel flutter
 Down for you alone?
 Lest you're disbelieving
 That sweet tale of old,
 God's divine conceiving
 Which to you I told.

The Worldly Shepherdess
 Pray, what music ringing
 Echoes thru the sky,
 As the angels singing
 Wing their flight on high?
 Is it not a pleasure
 Then to hear their round
 To a novel measure
 Tunefully resound?

The Pious Shepherdess
 Now you have consoled me.
 Sweet the air they sing,
 And their words that hold me
 In your heart shall ring.
 While in cadence rising
 To the oboe's sound,
 Harmony devising,
 Let us sing our round.
*Note: There are a great number of
 verses to this dialogue—but these
 above carry the best of it.*

34

OLD FRENCH: Provençal de Basquet
Les enfants a la Creche

Chorus

Oh, see, they come, the village children,
 All innocent their voices ring,
 Gladly indeed the call they follow,
 Here to the Lord their off'rings bring.

Boys

Precious gifts the children are bearing,
 The souls their great Creator gave.
 Pure hearts burning clear in the presence
 Of Him who came their souls to save.

Chorus

Girls

We salute thee, gracious Redeemer,
 Who from sin hath set us free;
 We will praise Thee, O Son of Mary,
 Here and thru eternity. *Chorus*

All

Let us form a great peaceful army,
 Thee to follow here below,
 For the harvest of the future,
 We Thy blessed word will sow. *Chorus*

35

OLD FRENCH
Basancon: Franche Comte
 (South Eastern France)
Chantans! Bargies, Noue, Noue.

Shepherds! shake off your drowsy sleep,
 Rise and leave your silly sheep;

Angels from heav'n around loud singing,
Tidings of gear joy are bringing,

Chorus

Shepherds! the chorus come and swell!
Sing Noel, oh sing, Noel!

Hark! even now the bells ring round,
Listen to their merry sound:
Hark! how the birds' new songs are making
As if winter's chains were breaking.

See how the flowers all burst anew
Thinking snow is summer dew;
See how the stars afresh are glowing,
All their brightest beams bestowing!

Cometh at length the age of peace:
Strife and sorrow now shall cease:
Prophets foretold the wondrous story
Of this Heaven-born Prince of Glory.

Shepherds! then up and quick away,
Seek the Babe ere break of day;
He is the hope of every nation,
All in Him shall find salvation.

36

OLD FRENCH: Provençal
La Marche des Rois

'Twas at morn
I met the proud array
Of three great kings who traveled, mighty
magés;

'Twas at morn
I met the proud array
Of three great kings upon the broad highway.
Their bodyguard
The highway barred,
Their men-at-arms, a troop of youthful pages:
Their bodyguard
The highway barred,
With gold each jerkin gleamed, and halebard.

Banners flew,
They surely were most fair,
To catch the breezes as they come a-blowing;
Camels, too,

Swung by with stately air,
Their harness glittering with jewels rare;
With swift repeat
The loud drums beat,

From time to time their masters honor showing;
With swift repeat
The loud drums beat
To time the progress that mine eyes did meet.

High upraised
In chariot bright with gold
I saw the kings, as meek as angels faring;
High upraised
In chariots gold-embled

I saw rich standards and their splendor praised.
The oboe clear
Did charm my ear,
The praise of God its music sweet declaring;

The oboe clear
Did charm my ear,
A sweeter music I will never hear.

With amaze
I saw the proud array.
And drew aside to watch the chariots rolling,
With amaze
I saw the proud array

Until afar its music died away.

To lead them on
A bright star shone,
The stately march of the Magi kings controlling;

To lead them on
A bright star shone,
Nor stopped until unto the Child they'd won.
(*The Church celebrates on the Day of the Three Kings the three miracles comprised in the following stanza: Epiphany.*)

'Tis to-day
Unto our King we pray,
Baptized by John, the man of Goddis sending.

'Tis to-day
Unto our King we pray,
Whose law the universe must e'er obey,
Who water changed
Into red wine,
A wondrous miracle, human power transcend-

ing,
Who water changed
Into red wine,
To prove to all His gracious power divine.

37

OLD FRENCH: "*Nous Sommes Trois
Souverains Princes*", The Three Wise Men

We are the three sovereign princes
From Orient

Who travel far from our provinces
To Occident

To honor Him, the King of kings,
Born Christmas morning,
And learn the law of Love He brings,
His earthly birth adorning.

We wish to render all due honor
To His great love;

We wish to give to our own Donor
All might above;

And to this God of Peace we bring
Diadems royal,

In heart and deed our people sing
To Him with praises loyal.

In starry sky, beneath the lowly
Blue veil of night,
Gleams bright that star, mighty and holy,
Which leads us right:

Its guiding rays we shall pursue
As we adore Him,

Until our heart's desire comes true,
And we shall kneel before Him.

Ho, shepherds, kindly give us entrance,
Good friends and dear.

Unto the King of Grace, if presence
He grants us here:

For we have come with loving zeal
From Arab regions,

Before the Son of God to kneel,
Great creator of legions.

These vases hold some courteous presents,
Our offerings:—

The purest myrrh, and gold, and incense,
From Eastern kings:

Accept, dear Lord, and hold them fair,
Accept our treasure;

And bless the gifts, and those who bear,
We ask of Thy good pleasure.

Tr. by R.M.D.

ENGLISH

The Babe in Bethlem's Manger Laid

The babe in Bethlem's manger laid,
In humble form so low,
By wondering angels is surveyed
Thru all his scenes of woe:

Chorus

*Nowell, Nowell,
Lord, sing a Savior's birth;
All hail his coming down to earth
Who raises us to Heaven.*

For not to sit on David's throne
With worldly pomp and joy;
He came to earth for sin 't'atone,
And Satan to destroy. (Ref.)

To preach the word of life divine,
And feed with living bread,
To heal the sick with hand benign,
And raise to life the dead. (Ref.)

He preached, he suffered, bled and
died,
Uplift 'twixt earth and skies;
In sinners' stead was crucified,
For sin to sacrifice: (Ref.)

Well may we sing a Savior's birth,
Who need the grace so given,
And hail his coming down to earth
Who raises us to heaven: (Ref.)

OLD ENGLISH

A virgin most pure, so the Prophet foretold,
Should bring forth a Saviour, which now we
behold,
To be our Redeemer from death, hell, and sin,
Which Adams's transgression had wrapped us
in.

Chorus

*Aye and therefore be merry, set sorrow aside,
Christ Jesus our Saviour was born on this tide.*

At Berthelem city in Jewry it was
That Joseph and Mary together did pass,
All for to be taxed with many one mroe.
Great Caesar commanded the same should be
so.

But when they had entered the city so fair,
A number of people so mighty was there
That Joseph and Mary, whose substance was
small,
Could find in the inn there no lodging at all.

Then were they constrained in a stable to lie,
Where horses and asses used for to tie;
Their lodgings so simple they took it no scorn,
But against the next morning our Saviour was
born.

The King of all kings to this world being
brought,
Small store of fine linen to wrap Him was
sought,
But when she had swaddled her young Son so
sweet
Within a poor manger she laid Him to sleep.

Then God sent an angel from heaven so high,
To certain poor shepherds in fields where they
lie,

And bade them no longer in sorrow to stay,
Because that our Saviour was born on this day.

Then presently after the shepherds did spy
Vast numbers of angels to stand in the sky;
They joyfully talked and sweetly did sing,
To God be all glory, our heavenly King.

To teach us humility all this was done,
And learn, we from thence haughty pride for
to shun:

A manger His cradle who came from above,
The great God of mercy, of peace, and of love.

ENGLISH

"The Seven Joys of Mary"
Words Traditional

The first good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of one;
To see the blessed Jesus Christ
When he was first her Son.
When he was first Son, good man;

*And blessed may He be,
Both Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
To all eternity.*

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of two;
To see her own son Jesus Christ
To make the lame to go.
To make the lame to go, good man:
(Chorus)

The next good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of three;
To see her own son Jesus Christ
To make the blind to see.
To make the blind to see, good man:
(Chorus)

The next good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of four;
To see her own son Jesus Christ
To read the Bible o'er.
To read the Bible o'er, good man:
(Chorus)

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of five;
To see her own son Jesus Christ
To raise the dead alive.
To raise the dead alive, good man.
(Chorus)

The next good joy our Mary had,
It was the joy of six;
To see her own son Jesus Christ
To bear the Crucifix.
To bear the Crucifix, good man:
(Chorus)

The next good joy that Mary had,
It was the joy of seven;
To see her own son Jesus Christ
To wear the Crown of heaven.
To wear the Crown of heaven, good man.
(Chorus)

TWO ANCIENT ACCUMULATIVE CAROLS

NOTE: This type of song was very popular in ancient times, and used also to be sung or played with forfeits, i.e., you forfeited something for every error in memory made in the increasing or diminishing verses. These are Secular Carols. Dozens of versions are found in different times and places. Below we combine several, for greater clarity: at that, who knows what they mean?

41

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS

On the First Day of Christmas
my true love sent to me
a Partridge in a Pear Tree.
Second—Two Turtle Doves and
Third—Three French Hens
Fourth—Four Calling Birds
Fifth—Five Goldie Rings
Sixth—Six Geese a-laying
Seventh—Seven Swans a-swimming
Eighth—Eight Boys a-singing
Ninth—Nine Ladies dancing
Tenth—Ten Lords a-leaping
Eleventh—Eleven Pipers a-piping
Twelfth—Twelve Drummers drumming

42

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Leaders

Come, and I will sing to you.

Chorus

What will you sing to me

Leaders

I will sing you one-e-ry.

Chorus

What is your one-e-ry?

Leaders

One and One is God alone,
and evermore shall be so.

Chorus (Repeat)

(Each time add new count.)
and evermore shall be so.

One and One is God alone,
a-clothed all in green-O;
Two and two are lily-white babes,
Three of them are Strangers;
Four are the Gospel Makers;
Five are the Flamboys under the boat;
Six are the patient Waiters;
Seven are the seven Stars in the sky;
Eight are the Gabriel Angels;
Nine are the nine that brightly shine;
Ten are the Ten Commandments;
Eleven and eleven are gone to heaven;
Twelve are the Twelve Apostles:

43

OLD ENGLISH

The Praise of Christmas

All hail to the days
That merit more praise
Than all the rest of the year,
And welcome the nights
That double delights

As well for poor as for peer.
Good fortune attend
Each merry man's friend
That doth but the best that he may,
Forgetting old wrongs
In carols and songs,
To drive the cold winter away.

This time of the year
Is speet in good cheer,
And neighbors together do meet,
To sit by the fire,
With friendly desire,
Each other in love for to greet.
Old grudges forgot,
As put in the pot,
And sorrows aside they all lay;
The old and the young
Do carol this song,
To drive the cold winter away.

When old Christmas-tide
Comes in like a bride,
With ivy and green holly clad,
Twelve days in the year
Much mirth and good cheer
In every household is had,
The countymen's guise
Is then to devise
Some gambols of Christmas play,
Where every young man
Does the best that he can
To drive the cold winter away.

44

OLD ENGLISH

"Bonny sweet Robin" (1661)

Now farewell, good Christmas,
Adieu and adieu!
I needs now must leave thee,
And look for a new;
For till thou returnest,
I linger in pain,
And I care not how quickly
Thou comest again.

But ere thou departest
I purpose to see
What merry good pastime
This day will show me;
For a king of the wassail
This night we must choose,
Or else the old customs
We carelessly lose.

The wassail well spiced
About shall go round,
Tho it cost my good master
Best part of a pound:
The maid in the buttery
Sands ready to fill
Her nappy good liquor
With heart and goodwill.

And to welcome us kindly
Our master stands by,
And tells me in friendship
One tooth is a-dry.

Then let us accept it
As lovingly, friends;
And so for this twelfth-day
My carol here ends.

45

OLD ENGLISH
"Well-a-day" (1576)

Christmas hath made an end,
Welladay, welladay,
Which was my dearest friend,
More is the pity;
For with a heavy heart
Must I from thee depart,
To follow plough and cart,
All the year after.

Lent is fast coming on,
Welladay, welladay,
That loves not any one,
More is the pity;
For I doubt both my cheeks
Will look thin, eating leeks;
Wise is he then that seeks
For a friend in a corner.

All our good cheer is gone,
Welladay, welladay,
And turned to a bone,
More is the pity.

In my good master's house
I shall eat no more souse,
Then give me one carouse,
Gentle, kind butler.

It grieves me to the heart,
Welladay, welladay,
From my friend to depart,
More is the pity.
Christmas, I mean, 'tis thee
That thus forsaketh me;
Yet till one hour I see
Will I be merry.

46

THERE IS A PLANT
Melody by L. Bourgeoise, 1551

There is a plant, of noble form and hue,
From Paradise it came, this royal flower.
Born of the breath of God and morning dew,
Nurtured and watered of the heavenly
shower:

'Mid thorns and thistles lily-like it grew,
And oped at Christmas in my Lady's bower.

A white and ruddy Rose, with rich perfume,
As balsam sweet, unto the mouth as honey:
'Tis ay in blossom, in December's gloom,
As in July, on cloudy days or sunny:

Way-faring men may cull this priceless Bloom,
And so they will, for love, and free of
money.

Jesu, thou art this Rose, of Jesse's stem,
The Virgin-born, whose praise my song
engages

O for the heavenly new Hierusalem,
Land, rages from summer's heat and winter's
Where I might eye thee, Babe of Bethlehem,
And chaunt thy grace thru never-ending
ages.

47

OLD GERMAN: *In Dulci Iubilo*
Bartholomew Gesius, 1601

In dulci iubilo
Now sing we all Io!
He, my love, my wonder,
Licht in presepio,
Like any sunbeam, yonder
Matris in gremio
Alpha es ei O,
Alpha es ei O.

O Jesu parvule,
I yearn for thee alway:
Listen to my ditty,
O puer optime,
Have pity on me, pity:
O princeps glorie,
Trabe me post te,
Trabe me post te.

O Pavis Charitas,
O Nati lenitas;
All with us was over,
Per nostra crimina:
But then thou didst recover
Celorum gaudia:
O that we were there!
O that we were there!

Ubi sunt gaudia
If that they be not there?
Angels there are singing
Nova cantica.
Sweet bells the while a-ringing
In regis curia:
O that we were there!
O that we were there!

48

OLD SPANISH: Catalan
Fum, fum, fum!

On December twenty-fifth, sing,
Fum, fum, fum!

On December twenty-fifth, sing,
Fum, fum, fum!

On that night a child was born
Pink and white, at break of morn,
In a stable dark and dreary,
Lay the Son of Virgin Mary,
Fum, fum, fum!

Holidays the good Lord gave us,
Fum, fum, fum!

Holidays the good Lord gave us,
Fum, fum, fum!

Summer feasting suits us best,
Yet, withal His name be blest,
He who doth our needs remember,
Sent us Christmas in December,
Fum, fum, fum!

49

OLD SPANISH: Catalan
El cant des Ancels

When dawned earth's greatest light
The birds sang all the night,
Earth's festal morning voicing,

From every feathered throat
Rang out the sweetest note,
To set the world rejoicing.

(Repeat last 3 lines)

They sang from near and far:
"He shineth as a star."
The goldfinch told the story,
The linner and the lark,
Sang gently to the dark,
Reciting all His glory.

(Repeat last 3 lines)

As that great hour drew near,
When first He should appear,
In ev-ry woodland springing,
Where flow'ry plants were seen,
The trees put forth their green,
All honor to Him bringing.

(Repeat last 3 lines)

50

OLD SPANISH: Catalan

El Rabada

Wake, O wake, ye shepherds all!
Rouse, O rouse ye from your slumbers!
Behold in myriad numbers
The stars above yon stall.

Lift your voices, shout on high,
All your weary cares forsaking!
The morning light is breaking
Across the dark blue sky.

Heed the message of this morn
That the angel choirs are singing;
The earth will soon be ringing,
The Son of God is born.

Up, ye shepherds, and with me
Unto Bethlehem be going,
Where 'mid the cattle lowing
The Child asleep doth be.

Let us taken an offering,
To the Child our love confessing,
Him evermore addressing
Our Savior and our King.

51

DUTCH: Bruges, 1609

Heer Jesus beest evn Hofken

Geestlijke Harmonie: Emmerich

King Jesus hath a garden, full
of divers flow'rs,
Where I go culling posies gay,
all times and hours:

Chorus

There naught is heard
But Paradise bird,
Harp, dulcimer, lute,
With cymbal,
Trump and tymbal,

And the tender, soothing flute.

(Repeat last 3 lines)

The Lily, white in blossom there,
is Chastity:
The Violet with sweet perfume,
Humility. (*Chorus*)

The honny Damask-rose is known

as Patience;
The blithe and thrifty Marygold,
Obedience. (*Chorus*)

The Crown Imperial bloometh too
in yonder place:
'Tis Charity, of stock divine,
the flow'r of grace. (*Chorus*)

Yet, 'mid the brave, the bravest prize
of all may claim

The Star of Bethlem—Jesus—
blessed be His Name! (*Chorus*)

Ah! Jesu, Lord, my heal and weal,
my bliss complete,
Make Thou my heart thy garden-plot,
fair, trim and neat,
That I may hear
This music clear: *etc.*

52

DUTCH: Cradle-Carol, 1697

Slaap, mijn Kindjelijc

Sleep, my little one, sleep, my dearest one,
Mary sings ever to her Child;
Sleep, my heart's delight; sleep, my treasure
bright,
Sings the father as low and mild.
Sing and adore Him, ye little ones all;
His hands and his feet, see how tender and
small.

Tired of play at last, close thy two eyes fast,
Wind and cold Thou needst not fear,
Harm shall not come to Thee, safe shall Thy
slumber be,

Sleep, Thy mother is watching near,
Sing and adore Him with tuneful voice,
Ye bright host of angels, O sing and rejoice!

53

DUTCH: Cradle-Carol, 1638

In Bethlehem geboren

In Bethlehem the lowly,
A Child is born this day,
Him have I chosen solely
My comfort and my stay.
Ah, yes! Ah, yes!
A Child is born this day.

My heart shall still confess Thee,
Thy Name will I adore,
In grief and gladness bless Thee
If longer, yet the more,
Ah, yes! Ah, yes!
Thy Name will I adore.

54

OLD GERMAN

Corner's "Nachtigall", 1649
Ein Kindlein in der Wiegen

I heard an Infant weeping,
And yearning sore for rest;
But, ere he fell a-sleeping
Thus sang his Mother blest:
Babe Jesu, Lullaby,

My Lamb, from God forth-faring,
My Life, my guiding Star,

Fair lily, of my bearing,
Than jewel rarer far:
Babe Jesu, Lullaby.

But if thou would'st a sweeter,
And more melodious chant,
To mend our faulty meter,
Bid angels make descant:
Babe Jesu, Lullaby.

55

OLD FRENCH: Basse-Normandie

O bienheureuse nuit
Cradle-Carol

O night, peaceful and blest,
For now Jesus doth rest,
Near His fond watchful mother;
Soft light o'er Him doth shine,
Around, bright angels hover,
He is the Child Divine.

O dawn, sweet to the heart!
With thee shadows depart;
For the clouds all are breaking!
Christ brings light from afar;
The earth now is awaking—
He is the Morning Star.

O morn, radiant with love!
The choirs hymn thee above;
For their watch now is ended!
On high, songs never cease,
While ours with theirs are blended—
He is the Prince of Peace.

O day, laden with power!
Bright day, wondrous thy dower!
For, tho' laid in a manger,
Christ rules earth with His rod;
And He, born as a stranger,
He is the Mighty God.

56

OLD FRENCH: Poitou

Chanton! je vous en prie
Lucas Le Moigne, 1520

Prologue

Now sing we all full sweetly
Of blessed Mary's fame!
Who, for her grace, right meetly,
Received her gracious name.

Men and Women:

To save this race of mortals,
The prophets old did say,
That Christ would leave heaven's portals,
As Man with men to stay;
And Mary, purest maiden,
By God's most sure decree
Was with this duty laden
His Mother here to be.

Men:

Now tell us, blessed Mary,
What messenger did bring
To thee the news so wondrous,
Of Christ our heavenly King.

Women:

'Twas Gabriel, the white-robed,
Who brought this news to me,
That Christ, the God incarnate,
An infant mild would be.

Men:

And what said he, O Mary,
This angel when he spoke,
When he foretold that Jesus
On earth our form should take?

Women:

He said, "This Lord be with thee,
For full of grace thou art,
And thou art highly favoured,
Thou meek and pure of heart."

Men:

Now tell us, blessed Mary,
Say where didst thou abide,
When Gabriel did promise
This first great Christmas-tide?

Women:

In Galilee I rested,
In holy love and fear,
And in my meditation
The Angel did appear.

Men:

Did shepherds from the mountains
In humble garb and meek,
With joyous exultation
The Holy Infant seek?

Women:

They sought the humble manger,
And soon as they did see
The new-born Prince of Glory,
They sank on bended knee.

Men and Women:

We humble trust, O Mary,
That God will give us grace
To love this Holy Infant
And ever seek His face;
So at the last great Advent,
When He as Judge shall stand,
We may amongst the blessed,
Be placed at His right hand.

57

ENGLISH: (Dorsetshire)
A Yeoman's Carol

Let Christians all with joyful mirth,
Both young and old, both great
and small,

Now think upon our Savior's birth,
Who brought salvation to us all:

*This day did Christ man's soul from
death remove,
With glorious saints to dwell in
heaven above.*

No palace, but an ox's stall,
The place of his nativity;
This truly should instruct us all
To learn of him humility:

A stable harbored them, where they
Continued till this blessed morn,
Let us rejoice and keep the day
Wherein the Lord of life was
born:

He that descended from above,
Who for your sins has meekly
died,

Make him the pattern of your love;
So will your joys be sanctified:

XIth CENTURY, or earlier.
Laetibundus

Come, rejoicing,
Faithful men, with rapture singing
Alleluya!

Monarch's Monarch,
From a holy maiden springing,
Mighty wonder!

Angel of the Counsel here,
Sun from star, he doth appear,
Born of maiden;

He a Sun who knows no night,
She a star whose paler light
Fadeth never.

As a star its kindred ray,
Mary doth her Child display,
Like in nature.

Lebanon his cedar tall
To the hyssop on the wall
Lowly bendeth.

Yet the Synagogue denied
What Esaias had descried:
Blindness fell upon the guide
Proud, unheeding.

If her prophets speak in vain,
Let her heed a Gentile strain,
And, from mystic Sybil, gain
Light and leading.

No longer then delay,
Hear what the Scriptures say,
Why be cast away
A race forlorn?

Turn and this Child behold,
That very Son, of old
In God's write foretold,
A maid hath borne.

XIVth CENTURY
In Hoc Anni Circulo

In the ending of the year
Light and life to man appear:
And the Holy Babe is here,
By the Virgin Mary.

*For the Word becometh flesh
By the Virgin Mary.*

In a manger He is laid:
Ox and ass their worship paid;
Over him her veil is spread
By the Virgin Mary.

And the Heavenly Angels' tongue
'Glory in the highest' sung;
And the shepherds o'er him hung,
With the Virgin Mary.

Wherefore let our quire today
Banish sorrow far away,
Singing and exulting aye
With the Virgin Mary.

OLD ITALIAN: Neapolitan
Song of the Bagpipers

When Christ our Lord was born
at Bethlehem afar,
Altho 'twas night, there shone
as bright as noon a star:
Never so brightly,
Never so whitely,
Shone the stars, as on that night!
The brightest star went
Away to call the Wise Men
from the Orient.

There were no foes on Earth,
or warfare blazing.
Beside the lion then
the sheep was grazing,
Safe by the leopard,
Wander'd the shepherd,
With the bear the calf did play,
The Wolf so savage
Would not the tender lamb
Molest or ravage.

While shepherds in the fields
their flocks were tending,
A shining angel came
from heaven descending;
When he beheld them,
Straightway he told them:
Hear my voice, be not afraid!
Be glad, rejoice, now,
For Earth has all become
like Paradise, now!

OLD GERMAN: Rhenish
Corner's "Gesangbuch", 1631
O Jesulein zart

Wo, Jesu, is me
Thy cradle to see:
Thou tender Child, say,
Why liest thou on hay?

*Sleep, darling; close
Thine eyes in repose;
And make us rest
In Paradise blest.
Wo, Jesu, is me
Thy cradle to see:
Thou tender Child, say,
Why liest thou on hay?*

Sleep on, prithee, rest;
Naught shall thee molest;
For ox, ass and sheep
Be all fast asleep. (Ref.)

Hark! Seraphim high
And Cherubim cry:
Thy cradle a flock
Of angels doth rock. (Ref.)

See! see! darling dear,
Saint Joseph is here;
And I too am near:
Sleep on without fear. (Ref.)

Sir ox, quiet keep;
The Infant will sleep;
Ass, prithee, lie still,
To sleep is his will. (Ref.)

A BACH CHORAL

Christmas Oratorio
Mediaeval, noted in 1539

Within yon gloomy manger lies
The Lord who reigns above the skies:
Within the stall where beasts have fed
The Virgin-born doth lay His head.
With all Thy hosts, O Lord, we sing,
And thanks and praise to Thee we bring
For Thou, O long-expected Guest!
Hast come at length to make us blest.
Ah! dearest Jesus, Holy Child,
Make Thee a bed, soft, undefil'd,
Within my heart, and there recline,
And keep that chamber ever Thine.
All honor, laud, and glory be,
O Jesus, Virgin-born, to Thee;
Whom with the Father, we adore,
And Holy Ghost for evermore.

A BACH CHORAL

Christmas Oratorio

How shall I fitly meet Thee,
And give Thee welcome due?
The nations long to greet Thee,
And I would greet Thee, too:
O Fount of light, shine brightly
Upon my darken'd heart,
That I may serve Thee rightly,
And know Thee as Thou art.

OLD GERMAN: Rhenish

Vom Himmel kompt, O Engel Mainz, 1628

Descend from heav'n, ye angels, come;
Eya! Eya! Lullaby, lullaby, lullaby—
With song, ding-dong, with pipe and drum;
Alleluya, Alleluya!
Sing ye of Jesus, Mary's Son.
Nor leave behind, ye tuneful quires,
Eya! Eya! Lullaby, lullaby, lullaby—
Your merry harpsichords and lyres;
Alleluya, Alleluya!
And sing of Jesus, Mary's Son.
And let your voices rise and fall.
Eya! Eya! Lullaby, lullaby, lullaby—
With organ, lute and virginal;
Alleluya, Alleluya!
In praise of Jesus, Mary's Son.
Sing: Peace, goodwill from shore to shore,
Eya! Eya! Lullaby, lullaby, lullaby—
Glory on high for evermore;
Alleluya, Alleluya!
In praise of Jesus, Mary's Son.

OLD GERMAN

Im Himmel, im Himmel
Anonymous, undated.

In heaven, in heaven
so great is the joy (2)
In singing the angels
their time do employ.
In singing, bell ringing,
and worshipful mirth, (2)

They bless the Creator
of heaven and earth.

No city for grace may
with Sion contend, (2)
Nor measure her pleasure
and peace without end.

OLD RUSSIAN

Kolyada—Father Christmas

Kolyada, Kolyada,
Walks about on Christmas eve;
Kolyada, Kolyada,
At the window, cakes to leave.

Kolyada, Kolyada,
Come this Holy Night we pray,
Kolyada, Kolyada,
Came and brought us Christmas Day.

OLD FRENCH: Flemish

Chants Populaires de Flamands de France
'tis is naer reden en behoorte

'Tis our right and bounden duty,
Gentles all, to sing for mirth
O'er a Babe, the King of beauty,
And recount His triple birth,
And recount
And recount
And recount His triple birth (2)

First we hail the birth eternal
Of the Word of God, the Son;
Gotten of the Sire supernal,
Ere the world or time begun. (3)

Secondly, good sirs, remember
Mary's childing in a stall;
Jesu's birth-day in December,
To repair our shameful fall. (3)

Thirdly, ye with high endeavor,
Who so choose the better part,
Yesterday, to-day, for ever,
Christ is born within your heart. (3)

Once the Lord, of his compassion,
Veil'd his majesty of awe;
And was found in human fashion,
As a Babe, in hay and straw. (3)

At the Communion Time
O the love, surpassing wonder!
Still the Eternal and Divine
Hides His Body daily under
Homely forms of bread and wine. (3)

Christ-Child, low we bow before Thee,
Lrd and God Omnipotent;
Truly present, we adore Thee
Here beneath a Sacrament. (3)

Doxology

Thee we praise, O Christ, together
With the Sire and Spirit blest,
By the upper world, and nether,
Three in One by all confest. (3)